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## **SORGHUM E-Notes**

February 13, 2009

**NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS:**  
*the voice of the sorghum industry*

### **Sorghum Industry Leaders Travel to Washington, D.C.**

The National Sorghum Producers (NSP) led a delegation of 22 sorghum growers and industry leaders to Washington D.C. this week to meet with Members of Congress, Senators and other key leaders in legislative and regulatory arenas. NSP's D.C. Fly-In is an annual event that allows producers the opportunity to make the industry's priorities known to their representatives and key decision makers in D.C.

One of the highlights of the Fly-In was a meeting with new Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In the meeting, Vilsack laid out his priorities as he begins his duties as Secretary of Agriculture. Among other things, he stressed the importance of utilizing carbon credits in agricultural markets. He also discussed the importance of encouraging and maintaining conservation and environmentally friendly production practices.

On the Hill, delegates will be met with Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee Colin Peterson, and Ranking Member Frank Lucas as well as the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry and their home state Senators and Members of Congress.

Sorghum leaders representing Colorado were Terry and Marcella Swanson. Leaders from Kansas were Sue Schulte, Greg Krissek and Will Bramlett. Gerald Simonsen, Donald Bloss, Jacob Geis - a Sorghum Foundation scholarship recipient - and John Dolnicek represented Nebraska. Delegates from Texas were Brian McCuiston, David Thomas, Dan Krienke, Roxann Wiginton, Danny Beyer, Benjamin Smith, Kristin Heinmann and Lance Layton, who is also a recipient of the Sorghum Foundation scholarship. New Mexico producer Toby Bostwick - Chairman of the NSP Board of Directors - and Matt Lansford of New Mexico attended as well as Kenneth Rose of Oklahoma. The NSP staff included Hannah Lipps and Shelee Padgett.

### **Stimulus Package to Include Ag Support**

The House and Senate are set to pass a stimulus package tonight. The bill includes support and funding for agriculture but final details are not readily available. NSP will monitor the bill and have more details next week on the funding allocated to agriculture in the bill.

### **U.S. Grains Council Holds Membership Meeting**

At the U.S Grains Council's 6th International Marketing Conference and 49th Annual Membership Meeting, Council international directors presented to more than 200 attendees about the state of the economy in their respective countries as well as the potential for U.S. grains in those markets.

Sorghum industry leaders and state organization leaders were in attendance to work on sorghum market development plans for the coming year.

"U.S. grain producers have a stake in the global marketplace and that role has become more important than it ever has before," said U.S. Grains Council Special Assistant Erick Erickson. "There are a lot of uncertainties of what 2009 will bring for U.S. commodities, world economic growth, oil prices and financial turnaround. The downturn in total world trade and increase in exportable supplies in countries like Russia and the European Union will provide a tough year for U.S. coarse grains exports. However, the fundamentals for U.S. farmers to sustain their market share and continue to meet global demand are intact."

Total world coarse grain production is expected to increase by 2.4 percent in 2009 as well as total world feed use, according to projection numbers from USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. U.S. farmers are the leading supplier of

coarse grains, providing more than 60 percent of the world's corn and sorghum.

## **NSP Monitoring Ag Pesticide Rules**

On January 7, 2009, The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals vacated a 2006 EPA Clean Water Act (CWA) rule relating to pesticide use. If it is allowed to stand, the Court's decision will require a fundamental change in the regulation of agricultural pesticides.

The court has decided that applicators will need a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to apply pesticides into, around, and over water in most instances. States are expected to review their current NPDES permitting requirements for pesticide use in light of the court's decision.

What does this mean for agricultural producers who use pesticides? The court's broad ruling now requires - for the first time - that pesticide application will require a permit under the CWA when it will result in the addition of pesticide residue in the water. The EPA has not commented on how they will implement the ruling.

Several industry groups are asking for a rehearing of the case. National Sorghum Producers will continue to monitor the situation and work with other farm groups to insure that farmers are protected from unnecessary regulation of their ag pesticide use.

## **2007 Ag Census Released Last Week**

USDA released the much-anticipated 2007 Ag Census last week. The report reflected that there are 26,242 sorghum producers in the U.S., down from roughly 30,000 in the 2002 Census.

Although new farm operations tend to be smaller and more diversified with lower sales, there are nearly 76,000 more farms in the U.S. than there were five years ago. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said the increase is the result of efforts to encourage organic farming, boost land stewardship, improve productivity per acre and create opportunities in development of renewable energy. Smaller farms with less than \$2,500 in sales rose by 73,769; large farms with sales of more than \$100,000 increased by 45,771. Farms with sales more than \$500,000 grew by 43,000 during the same period.

On the other hand, the land in farms decreased by 16.2 million acres. Vilsack said he is "deeply concerned" about the drop in middle-size operations. In the last five years, U.S. farm operations have become demographically diverse. Full results of Census of Agriculture are available at [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov).

## **Kansas Makes Blender Pump Guidelines**

Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Adrian Polansky announced that he is making guidelines his department developed permanent for at-the-pump blending of biofuels. These blender pumps allow a choice of blend that works best for each vehicle. Polansky said, "This is a real boon for owners of flexible fuel vehicles who want more choice than either 10 percent or 85 percent ethanol that are the blends most frequently offered." To prevent non-flex vehicles from using a higher ethanol blend than is appropriate for their vehicle, the pumps will have a bright orange label that reads, "For use in flexible fuel vehicles only."

## **About Sorghum Notes**

SORGHUM Notes is a publication of the National Sorghum Producers. NSP represents U.S. sorghum producers. The organization serves as the voice of the sorghum industry from coast to coast through education and legislative and regulatory representation. To learn more about NSP visit our website at [www.sorghumgrowers.com](http://www.sorghumgrowers.com). Write to us at National Sorghum Producers, 4201 N Interstate 27, Lubbock, TX 79403. *To unsubscribe to Sorghum Notes, please reply to [hannah@sorghumgrowers.com](mailto:hannah@sorghumgrowers.com).* If you have questions about the sorghum industry or the National Sorghum Producers, please do not hesitate to **call NSP at (800) 658-9808**.

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## **Quote of the Week:**

“All I would tell people is to hold onto what was individual about themselves, not to allow their ambition for success to cause them to try to imitate the success of others. You’ve got to find it on your own terms.”

– Harrison Ford

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